

## 1. General Remarks

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One of the most interesting aspects of this study was to compare the current situation of the analysed societies with the past situation before the interethnic confrontations occurred. In some of the analysed countries a partition of the country occurred, while in other countries this could be prevented. However, in most of the latter the conflict lines within the societies still exist and return and reintegration concepts have to deal with this problem.

Still, the status of the implementation of minority policies in the analysed countries is very different. In Serbia a law on the protection and anchoring of minority rights was successfully adopted and various instruments were created.

In Kosovo it is still critical how to cope with the problem of minorities and their social and economical integration. The impact of the implementation of minority policies and the installation of minority advisors in the municipalities are still far from satisfactory. The public opinion tends to view the influx of minority returnees with suspicion.

The fate of post war Iraq is carefully observed by the international community and widely publicised all over the world. At a first glance there seems to be a huge progress at the beginning of 2005 regarding the interethnic future of Iraq due to the balanced ethnic composition of the government.

Nevertheless, there is still the potential that interests between majority and minority groups clash and may lead to a partition of the country, especially in northern Iraq.

Moreover, social or economic criteria like poverty, land ownership and certain economic activities are in most of the analyzed countries closely linked with the ethnic, religious or social identity (such as class or caste) of people. Implementing projects of development cooperation may lead to the reinforcement of patterns of perception encouraging and fostering already existing conflict lines and therefore adding fuel to ethnic confrontations.

Most recommendations of the persons included in this study addressed the question of exclusive support for minorities. One of the most important aspects for the interview partners was that development aid will not exclusively be directed to the returning minorities. As one of the lessons learnt from development cooperation in the Balkan region, the immediate environment of the beneficiaries has to be considered in the planning phase of development projects. The local communities do not only have to be deeply involved in the return and reintegration process of returnees, they also have to benefit from this reconstruction aid in order to evade jealousy of the majority communities.

Creating education and employment opportunities for the whole community is one of the most striking challenges but as well it is the most promising perspective for development.

Due to the fact that the context of the analyzed countries differs from each other significantly it is impossible to write guidelines on how to create win-win situations for minority and majority groups. However, the following general recommendations on the planning of development cooperation projects can be given as a result of this study:

### **Security situation in the countries of origin**

With respect to security problems it depends significantly on the local situation in the respective village, town or district, whether the return of minority affiliates is problematic or not. Therefore successful return projects involve extensive planning and information collection in the host country as well as follow-through with returnees and assistance to them in the country of origin.

In order to clarify access to shelter and housing, school attendance and medical care the return of families or groups of minorities should be clarified in advance with the respective municipality in the country of return in either case.

Persons feel more safe when they are returning to places where minority affiliates of their own kind are already living.

### **Combining reintegration with the development of the country**

Reintegration measures for minorities in the country of origin should be applied to the local political, administrative and economical structures there and should have effects on the development of the country in order to increase the acceptance of the public. Minority communities mostly require more intensive assistance to develop self-reliant structures. However, this problem should not be addressed by projects exclusively for minorities. The necessities of minorities should rather be incorporated into a broad development strategy for the whole community or region.

### **Education deficiencies as obstacles for economical integration**

For a sustainable social integration it is necessary to improve the standard of education of minorities. Deficiencies at the education level lead to an exclusion from the employment market today and maybe even more in the future. In some cases, however, not only the possibilities but also the willingness of the minorities to prepare for a longer period of training is still little developed in order to fulfil the future demands of the employment market.

Especially young people suffer from the lack of employment opportunities for the future. To prevent young people, especially those from ethnic minorities from further marginalisation and to prevent new tensions between different ethnic groups by the adolescent population, appropriate education and vocational training focussing on young people can contribute enormously to the stability of the society and the economy.

### **Integrating minorities with a long tradition of marginalisation**

Some minority groups, like the Roma in Kosovo, have to face a low social status because of their social marginalisation during a long period. This marginalisation led to a low stand of human capital like educational, language or vocational skills. Especially in the Balkan region success or failure of reintegration largely depends on the degree of integration before the person has left the country.

To reintegrate marginalised groups into the labour market it is highly recommended to apply a mixture consisting of supporting education, language training, further qualification, vocational training and other measures promoting the improvement of skills.

### **Training and Employment Promotion as a peacekeeping factor**

Training and employment promotion involving minorities in post-crisis situations are a peacekeeping factor. The higher the employment rate and the income, the more it is likely to secure the internal stabilisation and to solve the problems concerning the equalisation of ethnic groups within the population. Employment promotion can be an essential factor for the process of reconciliation within the society. To support the integration process of ethnic minorities and their involvement in economic development and work can as well lead to a reevaluation of the relationship among the different population groups in the public consciousness.

### **Arranging access of disadvantaged groups to the employment market**

Access to the employment market and criteria for promotion of disadvantaged groups on the employment market such as people belonging to minorities should be arranged. So

these people should get an extra support in an initial phase in order to have a chance to access the employment market at all. However, this assistance should always be in conjunction with the needs of the economy and the personal willingness of the individual beneficiary to perform.

### **Creating employment by the start-up of small and medium sized enterprises**

The possibilities for a placement into dependent employment at private companies in the countries of return are limited for minorities. There are a number of reasons for this like the level of preparatory training or the job experience is too low, but there may also be limited job offers for the majority of the population. A very interesting field of employment creation for minorities is the start-up of small businesses. Here they do not depend on the developments of the employment market. However, they have to possess competences and entrepreneurial qualities in order to survive especially the start-up phase, invest own capital and also need to establish interexchange with local or international markets.

### **Inclusion of confidence building measures**

The disruption of post war societies is deep and mistrust is high. To support the process of confidence-building of minority as well as of majority groups it is recommended to design operations in a way that majority as well as minority members can benefit from those.

Positive are particularly those projects supporting education or training on the job measures where minority and majority members work and learn together.

As a matter of fact building sustainable multi-ethnic communities is as important as the initial work to facilitate the return. In Germany, concepts of “Stadtteilvermittlung“ (township mediation) are implemented in some cities like Frankfurt/Main, mediating in case of tensions between migrant groups and Germans. Elements of these concepts could be applied to the realities of the countries of return as well.

### **Active involvement of community members**

Local democratic structures are highly dependent on social and political participation of the individual citizens as well as the organized civil society within a community. The active involvement of its members allows sustainable social inclusion and gives legitimacy to the democratic system and those in power, the local authorities. Applied to a post-war situation, new democracies are especially vulnerable and so, comprehensive community participation is even more important, especially for the social and political reintegration of returnees. The voice of everybody has to enter the process of decision making, especially the usually underrepresented voices of minorities such as youth, women, elder, ethnic groups, religious groups, etc. In that respect, supporting the voluntary engagement in social work and the self-organisation of groups can be an important tool to enhance participation, interaction and solidarity inside fractioned communities and therefore improve possibilities for successful reintegration.

### **Installation of minority advisors at community level**

In each region or municipality with a certain amount of minority inhabitants local minority advisors should be implemented. They have to be well informed about developments in the community and willing to communicate the interests of minorities within the local administration. The competences of these advisors should be expanded towards a first contact point, providing a welcoming environment to returning minorities from European host countries.

Local and communal representatives of the minorities are often put under pressure by their own kind. Often they are confronted with high expectations with regard to supporting the

economic integration and generating the income, which of course they cannot fulfil. In this context claims should not be satisfied immediately, but rather solutions should be found following the self-help principle.

### **Responsibility of local communities**

Local governments should deliver adequate services and be open to participation by all citizen. Minority employment should broadly reflect the population distribution in the municipality. Municipal budget expenditures should address the needs of minority populations. It should also demonstrate sufficient concern with specific issues considering minorities – in communities and mediation committees, community offices and municipal working groups.

### **Support of media for minority communities**

In some of the analysed countries programmes supporting media in minority languages are subsidised by various NGOs. They are very supportive in responding to the high illiteracy rates that persist in some areas and combine information, sensibilisation and education of the communities, even in very remote locations. Furthermore, newspapers directed at the majority population with daily or weekly supplements in minority languages can also be very helpful. These supplements should amongst others contain information about the labour market, job vacancies and business opportunities.

### **Decreasing interest of the international community as a risk**

There is an undeniable risk that the basis for sustainable returns will be squandered as international community interest and donor investments in certain post-conflict regions diminish. Lack of jobs and other economic opportunities as well as missing (further) education measures may prevent potential returnees from returning and the local population does not see any perspective for their future. Currently this danger has to be stated for Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as for Kosovo.